

June 15 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

Those of us in politics know that unanswered ads can sometimes be fatal. Well, if they're fatal this year, they will be fatal to young children who continue to be seduced and sold illegally cigarettes that will shorten their lives.

Remember that every year smoking-related illnesses cause more deaths than AIDS, alcohol, drugs, car accidents, fires, and murders combined. This is an important thing to do. So I ask you all, remember that 3,000 young children start to smoke every day, illegally; 1,000 will have their lives shortened because of it. The delays must come to an end. I ask the American people to make their voices heard. I ask the United States Senate to think about the Presidential Scholars here and all the young people they represent and pass the McCain bill this week. [Applause] Thank you.

I know many of the scholars here feel just as strongly as I do. Patrick LaRochelle from Signal Mountain, Tennessee, has been running 4½ minute miles. I never did that. [Laughter] He would sooner put on lead shoes than smoke

a cigarette. Alex Blane, from Charlotte, North Carolina, has aunts and uncles and friends who have worked on tobacco farms. Yet every single one of them is adamant that smoking should be a habit young people never start.

So I ask all of you whose communities look up to you: Help your young friends take a stand against peer pressure; help them take responsibility for their health in every way. At the national level we can and must make it more difficult from cigarette companies to market to teens. But to really cure our country of this significant public health challenge, we need the help of parents and siblings, teachers and coaches, and role models like you. The 21st century will be the time of greatest opportunity in all human history. I want every American young person to be able to enjoy it to the fullest.

Congratulations, and God bless you. Good luck.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Chemical Weapons Convention

June 15, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

Attached is a report to the Congress on cost-sharing arrangements, as required by Condition (4)(A) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on

Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
June 15, 1998.

Remarks on Signing the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act and the Care for Police Survivors Act

June 16, 1998

Captain, thank you very much for your remarks and even more for your service. I think it's fair to say that everyone in America followed the harrowing trail that you were part of just a few months ago and grieved the loss of those two troopers and the others who were killed. And we thank you for your presence here.

Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for all the work you've done over the last 5½ years. And thank you, Attorney General Reno, for doing a superb job of one of the things I asked you to do when we first talked about your becoming Attorney General, and that is being a genuine

advocate for local law enforcement officials throughout this country.

I thank all the Members of Congress who are here and the extraordinary bipartisan support for actually two pieces of legislation that I will sign today, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act and the Care for Police Survivors Act.

All the Members of Congress have been introduced, but I think I should note, because not all the sponsors are here, that the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Act was cosponsored in the Senate by Senators Campbell and Leahy, and in the House by Representatives Visclosky and LoBiondo. The Care for Police Survivors Act was cosponsored in the Senate by Senators Hatch and Biden, and in the House by Congressman Schumer and Congressman McCollum. I thank them and all the others who are here.

This is a time of progress and prosperity for our country. We're grateful to have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years and about to have our first balanced budget in 29 years. And we just learned that crime dropped in 1997, as the Vice President said, for a virtually unprecedented sixth year in a row. Murders have declined more than 25 percent, overall crime by more than 15 percent.

In many ways our country is seeing a return to personal responsibility—the welfare rolls are the smallest percentage of our population in 29 years—and to respect for the law—the crime rate last year dropped to a 25-year low. That makes a real difference in the lives of Americans. Our neighborhoods are safer; our families are more secure. Americans actually feel more free, and they are.

There has been a lot of debate in the country about the reasons for the drop in the crime rate. Of course, a better economy helps, and so do the neighborhood watch groups and all the efforts being made in communities across the country to keep kids away from crime, from school uniforms and curfews to after-school programs and tough truancy enforcement. But one thing is absolutely clear: A huge factor in the declining crime rate has been more police and better policing.

Across the country these men and women in uniform whom we honor here today are putting their lives on the line by joining their communities, getting out of the squad cars, pro-

tecting people. And America owes them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

When we passed the crime bill in 1994 we said in 6 years we would put 100,000 police on the street. I'm pleased to report that already we've helped to fund 76,000 of those 100,000. We're ahead of schedule and under budget. And I'm very proud of that because it makes all the Members of the Congress who have supported this partners in your fight against crime.

Just yesterday, for example, local officials and Federal agents together swept into one of the most troubled areas in Philadelphia as a part of Operation Sunrise. Working with local residents, they're targeting crimes and drugs, even graffiti. I applaud their efforts and hope they'll be replicated.

A crucial part of our 5½ year effort to make the Federal Government a partner with you for a safer America has been making sure that police officers have the tools to do the job. There are few tools more important than the body armor or bulletproof vests we see behind us. Over the past decade, body armor has saved the lives of more than 2,000 officers. The FBI estimates that the risk of a gun-related fatality is 14 times higher for an officer—let me say that again—14 times higher for an officer who does not wear a vest than for one who does.

The Vice President told you about Officer Margiotta and his vest. He's actually here today, and I'd like to ask him to stand, along with any other officer here who has ever been shot wearing a bulletproof vest. Will the others stand, please? *[Applause]*

The line of fire will always be a dangerous place. People can get hit in the leg in the wrong way and bleed to death. It will always be dangerous. But today we are making it less dangerous for those who are brave enough to walk that line. Every day all of you in uniform protect us; it's good to know that every once in a while there's something those of us on this end of the line can do to help to protect you.

So I'm proud to sign the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act. Twenty-five percent of the State and local law enforcement officers don't have this body armor to protect their lives. This legislation will help police departments provide it to them. It is a critical investment in the safety of those who have to be in harm's way.

Let me also say that as we do everything in our power to make police work a little less

dangerous, we have to recognize that every year there are all too many officers who do make the ultimate sacrifice for safe streets and children's futures. That is why I am also proud to be signing here the Care for Police Survivors Act, which supports counseling for families who have lost a loved one in the line of duty.

Last fall I also proposed to provide—help provide college scholarships for the children of slain officers. And again, I say, that I hope the Congress will pass that. That's an important investment and a small enough one to make in the children of those who give their lives to protect our children.

Community police are making children safer in our neighborhoods, and let me just say, once again recent events have reminded us of that in our schools. Just yesterday, I'm sure we all saw the story of a student who shot two people in a Richmond, Virginia, high school. They're expected to make a full recovery, and we thank God for that. And fortunately, the assailant was chased down several blocks and apprehended by Officer Ron Brown. Officer Brown was assigned to the school because of the COPS program our community policing program helped put in there. The COPS program is a good start, and I'm proud that he was a part of it, especially yesterday. Officer Brown is here today, and I'd like to ask him to stand. Thank you very much for your service, sir. *[Applause]*

Today I am asking Attorney General Reno and Secretary of Education Riley to report back to me before the start of the school year on ways that we can help to provide more police

in our schools, just as we have provided more police for our communities. Congressman Jim Maloney has proposed legislation to do that, and I urge Congress to pass his bill as a back-to-school special for America's children.

America is grateful for the hard work that all of you in uniform and all of those whom you represent throughout this country do. Every day, as you make our lives safer and our people more free and our children's future brighter, we know that you're there, and we're grateful. We understand, too, that you can't always do it alone. All of us as parents and leaders must teach our children right from wrong and turn them away from violence. But by working together and giving you the tools to do your job, we will make this a better and a safer nation in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

I would like to ask all the Members of Congress to come up here for the bill signing. Officer Brown, why don't you come on up, and why don't we ask these police officers to come up with us today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marc Metayer, captain, Vermont State Police; and Henrico County, VA, police officer Andrew Margiotta. S. 1605, the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act of 1998, approved June 16, was assigned Public Law No. 105–181. H.R. 3565, the Care for Police Survivors Act of 1998, approved June 16, was assigned Public Law No. 105–180.

Remarks to the Super Bowl XXXII Champion Denver Broncos

June 16, 1998

Good afternoon. Thank you very much. Commissioner Tagliabue, Mr. Bowlen, Coach Shanahan, friends of the Broncos, I'm delighted to see all of you here. I want to especially acknowledge the presence here of Governor Romer and Senators Allard and Campbell and Hatch, Representatives DeGette, Schaefer, and Schaffer, and Mayor Webb, Ms. Martinez. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Secretary Federico Pena and his wife, Ellen. He has been mayor of Denver, the Secretary

of Transportation, and now the Secretary of Energy. And this is his last public event before going into the private sector, and he is going out on a high. So, thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

Let me say to all of you, I think every football fan loved the last Super Bowl. Denver had one of the toughest roads to the Super Bowl in history, winning as a wild card team with a 12-point underdog, and won a magnificent game.